IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for processing information, comprising:

a)   maintaining a database of bar codes and destination information associated with the bar codes, the database being accessible by a remote device;

b)   receiving information, at the remote device, from a plurality of bar code scanners, the received information from each bar code scanner including source and bar code information;

c)   identifying at least a portion of the destination information stored in the database based on at least a portion of the received bar code information;

d)   accessing from the remote device data stored at a network location referenced by the identified portion of the destination information; and

e)   providing the data received by the remote device from the network location to users of the bar code scanners based on the received source information.

2.   (CANCELLED)

3.   (CANCELLED)

4.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, the information received from the bar code scanners being in an encrypted form, further comprising: decrypting the received information.

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5.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the information from the bar code scanners comprises receiving identification information associated with the bar code scanners.

6.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the information comprising:

receiving a portion of the destination information associated with the bar code information.

7.   (CANCELLED)

8.   (CANCELLED)

9.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

disassociating the bar codes with the destination information associated with those bar codes.

10.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating a bar code image file with one or more of the bar codes.

11.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating security information with one or more of the bar code scanners before

allowing use of the one or more scanners.

12.   (CANCELLED)

13.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving time information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

14.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving location information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

15.   (CANCELLED)

16.   (CANCELLED)

17.   (CANCELLED)

18.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information received by the remote device wirelessly.

19.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 4, wherein the network location is an Internet location.

20.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A portal for processing information, comprising:

a)   a first interface for receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners, the received information from each bar code scanner including source and bar

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code information; and

b)   a processor for:

identifying at least a portion of the destination information stored in a database,

wherein the database includes destination information associated with one or more bar

codes and the database being accessible by the processor,

accessing a network location referenced by the identified portion of the

destination information, and

providing the data received from the network location to users of the bar code

scanners, based on the received source information.

21.   (CANCELLED)

22.   (CANCELLED)

23.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, the

information received from the bar code scanners being in an encrypted form, wherein the

processor decrypts the received information.

24.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the

processor receives identification information associated with the bar code scanners.

25.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the

received information comprises a portion of the destination information associated with the bar

codes.

26.   (CANCELLED)

27.   (CANCELLED)

28.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the bar codes are disassociated with the destination information associated with those bar codes.

29.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor associates a bar code image file with one or more of the bar codes.

30.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor associates security information with one or more of the bar code scanners before allowing use of the one or more bar code scanners.

31.   (CANCELLED)

32.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives time information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

33.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives location information from one or more of the bar code scanners.

34.   (CANCELLED)

35.   (CANCELLED)

36.   (CANCELLED)

37.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives the information wirelessly.

38.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the network location is an Internet location.

39-115.   (CANCELLED)

116.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for using a bar code encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity, comprising:

    providing the bar code with a prefix portion indicating whether the bar code is encrypted;

    connecting a user to a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader depending upon whether the bar code is encrypted; and

    transmitting information from the Internet portal to the user when the user connects to the Internet portal.

117-130. (CANCELLED)

131.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method, comprising

receiving ~~the~~ bar codes selected by a group of users using ~~the~~ bar code readers;

allowing the group of users to connect to ~~the~~ <u>an</u> Internet portal in response to receiving

the bar codes;

permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web

page based on ~~the~~ information encoded in each bar code and based on ~~the~~ destination

information corresponding to the received bar codes, wherein the destination information is

accessible from the Internet portal.

132.   (CANCELLED)